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SOURCE Flamuri i Liris.ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, STANDARD OF LIVING IN ALBANIA

MONTHLY RATIONS, PRICES -- Pristina, Flamuri i Liris, Oct - Nov 52

Law No 226 of May 1950 places laborers in seven pay categories, ranging from 202 to 800 leks per day. White-collar workers receive 2,400 - 7,000 leks per month, depending on the locality and enterprise.

A married worker receiving 3,500 leks per month is obliged to pay state taxes, to make contributions to the R-d Cross fund, to pay dues for membership in sports groups, and to pay for food ration cards, for state loans, for office renovations, for various telegrams to Stalin, for telegrams of protest regarding border provocations, for subscriptions to newspapers (even though he may be illiterate), and for aid to Korea. The total expenditure comes to over 800 leks, leaving not more than 2,700 leks.

The monthly ration and payment for necessities are as follows: 2 kilograms of bread per day, 300 leks; 1.35 kilogram of sugar, 75 leks; 1.05 kilograms of oil, 65 leks; 4.3 kilograms of macaroni, 165 leks; 2 kilograms of beans per month (for the first 3 months of the year only), 140 leks; wood, 550 leks per cubic meter; rent, 100 leks; light, 100 leks; and 500 leks to keep equipment in working order. These expenses come to 1,995 leks. If the worker smokes one pack of cigarettes a day he will spend another 500 leks a month. This leaves very little with which to buy meat, which costs 130 leks per kilogram, vegetables at 40 leks per kilogram, clothing, and other necessary items. Furthermore, if the worker becomes ill and is out of work he receives 25 percent of his daily wages from social security if not a union member, and 60 percent if he has been a union member for 6 years. In addition, he is obliged to participate in voluntary work, without pay, in addition to his regular job.

The farmer is obliged to turn over to the state large amounts of his products, even if he cannot afford it. Thus, his family may be forced to eat only cabbage for the last 3 months of a nonproductive year. Up to the end of 1951, a farmer could leave his land if he saw that he could not possibly meet his obligations to himself and the state, and work in the mines for 400 grams of bread per day. Thus he could escape jail. Now, however, he is obliged to find a replacement to operate his farm before he is permitted to leave.

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Upon turning his products over to the state, the farmer receives the following sum per kilogram: grain, 2.5 leks; oats, 2 leks; corn, 2.5 leks; wool, 33 leks. For each egg he receives one lek. He cannot be paid in kind for the above products. For cotton he receives 18 leks, for tobacco, 23 leks, for sunflower, 27 leks, with payment in kind in horseshoes, nails, saddles, baby cradles, or other artisan items permitted. To receive industrial items such as shoes, sugar, and cloth the farmer must either bring goods above his quota or cheese, olives, butter, or oranges.

Frequently, a farmer cuts down his almond trees to escape the required payment of a 3,000-lek tax per tree, even though the tree may be unproductive.

Conditions for cooperative farm members are going from bad to worse. Great starvation exists; each person receives 8 kilograms of corn per month and often even this is lacking. Meat is available only during yearly religious feasts.

DELIVERY OBLIGATIONS, MINERS' CONDITIONS -- Pristina, Flamuri i Liris, Oct - Nov 52

Hamit Koci, former resident of Okshtun i vogel, Peshkopi Rreth, and a refugee in Yugoslavia, in a description of economic conditions in Albania, reported that the state buys meat from the peasant at 9 leks per kilogram. The meat is then sold in state stores for 150 leks per kilogram. Grain is bought for 2.5 leks and sold for 150. Wool is bought for 30 leks per kilogram and sold for 500. Since peasants are obliged to turn over to the state such items as grain, meat, and wool, and since in many cases the peasants do not possess such products, they are forced to buy them in state stores at high prices to meet their obligations and turn them over to collection stations.

Isuf Koci, brother of Hamit Koci, who also escaped into Yugoslavia, described the way he came to perform "voluntary" work in the Bulgize mines as follows: One day the head of the Okshtun i vogel Lokalitet (locality) read the list of names which had been brought to him by security officials. This list contained names of all persons who had "asked" to perform voluntary work at the Bulgize mines in order to complete the production plan. The name of Isuf Koci was included. On this particular day he had been working on his farm as usual and the call came as a complete surprise. However, he was obliged to leave his farm work and proceed with the others to the mines. At first they were told that they would work for one month, but as it later developed, they remained indefinitely.

Isuf Koci then described life in the Bulgize mines, terming it unbearable. He stated that food was very bad, that they were given nothing for breakfast, received broth made from potatoes and beans for lunch, and for supper had one or two boiled eggs which often contained birds. There were many volunteers who, because they were considered rich, were obliged to bring their own food. For the work, they were given 70 leks per day, with which they were obliged to pay for their food and sleeping accommodations. At the end of the month they had nothing left.

Isuf Koci continued: It was announced that they were to work 8 hours a day, but this was only on paper. In reality they worked 16 or more hours: 2 extra hours for the commandant, 2 extra hours for Stalin, for completion of the plan, and other reasons. If anyone left the mines, he was severely punished. The accused might be sentenced to 5 - 6 months in the mines without pay or on half-pay. The trials were conducted with great ceremony to set an example and instill fear into other workers and peasants.

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